

ON CHRIST'S METHOD OF SETTLING STRIKES.*

(By Rev. W. D. Reid, B.D.)

"If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between him and thee alone . . . If he will not hear thee take one or two more that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he neglect to hear them, tell it to the church but if he neglect to hear the church let him be to thee as an heathen man, and a publican."—Matt. 18. 15-17.

The speaker said: "There are here three definite principles involved, first conciliation, second arbitration, and third law." After applying these principles to the settling of personal disputes Mr. Reid dwelt with the question of strikes and how to settle them according to Christ's method. He said: "It is true that great controversies are going on around us upon every side between the two forces known as capital and labor. On one side we have capital sometimes haughty, determined and defiant, and on the other side, the working men ranged in solid front, proud, sensitive, and sometimes unreasonable. Each side determines not to yield to the other, and so a strike is declared, and an industrial war is on. Strikes are war, and war is always an expensive, and destructive method of settling any dispute. During a period of seven and one half years there have been in the civilized world over 6,000 such wars. During this time the wages of employees to the amount of \$35,000,000 were lost and the employers lost fully as much bringing the expenses of these controversies up to nearly \$70,000,000. And the pecuniary loss is not the worst feature of it. It means that man has been set against his brother and a deep and wide gulf has thus been opened between members of the human family, between people who should be brothers. Now, has Christ any message as to the settlement of such disputes? I answer "Yes", the text meets it exactly. Applying the law of Christ, we first have "Conciliation" "Go and talk it over with thy brother".

This is wise counsel. He says that same thing to the employer and the employee to day. Oftentimes to-day, when employees are dissatisfied with the pay, or the boss, they simply send in their demands in the form of a challenge, which stirs up all the worst that is in the master. Oftentimes too, the master instead of meeting and discussing the whole question with the men, simply post a schedule, which means "Conform to our terms or get out". Now this form of dealing is apt to stir up the very worst that is in the men, and accordingly the strike is declared. I believe that many a strike could be averted if employers and employees got together, and the whole question were laid before the men in the most reasonable light. This would be Christ's first step in the matter.

But, suppose that an agreement cannot be arrived at in that way, then Jesus provides another alternative, viz. Arbitration. He says "Take with you two or three witnesses or mediators". We call such men arbitrators. Now I believe this is the proper way to settle all such disputes. Let Capital appoint one man, and Labor another, and let them choose a third, and let these men go into the merits of the case most thoroughly and give their judgement. There is a board of arbitration in the North of England that in the last few years has

*Notes of Sermon preached in Taylor Church, Montreal, on the evening of May 2, 1908. On account of the large number in the congregation who are either involved in strikes already on, or about to come, the sermon was listened to with intense interest throughout.

arbitrated upon dozens of labor disputes, and their decision has been accepted every time. The Lemieux Act in Canada is a step in the right direction, and is an attempt in the line of our text. But supposing this has all been tried, and still the dispute is unsettled, what then? Christ has one more remedy, take it to the church. The church was the source of law, in the days of Jesus and when he said that he said what is equivalent to-day, to settle the dispute by law, that is by compulsion. Take the dispute, says Christ, before the tribunal where right will be vindicated, and the verdict must be accepted.

But perhaps some one says "Has the public the right to step in and forcibly settle a dispute between masters and men"? I answer, certainly it has, when their quarrel affects the public weal. How often, business is practically stopped, car service is ruined, transportation is impossible, the militia is called out, blood is shed, and irreparable damage is done to the whole community, because these two parties want to fight. The public has certain rights, and when these are infringed upon, then government has a clear right to step in and end the controversy. If two toughs are fighting out their quarrel upon the street, to the inconvenience of the general public, we do not ask their permission to settle their difficulties, but we step in and forcibly arrest them, and at the courthouse compel them to arbitrate their controversy. So should it be, in the great disputes caused by labor and capital. I see by Saturday's paper that the C.P.R. representative in the great controversy now on between that corporation and its employees declares that so far as that corporation is concerned it has withdrawn from the arbitration, and that the committee may arrive at what findings it will, they will pay no heed to them. In other words, because this worthy representative cannot get his own way, he won't play the game. Now what should be done, is to arbitrate on the general premises, and let the Board decide as to whether or no the East shall join with the west in this dispute, and then when that is settled go on with the general differences, and arbitrate them, and if the men will not abide by the decision, compel them to do so, and if the C. P. R. will not abide by the decisions of the Board, they should be compelled to do so, by act of Parliament if necessary.

This then, is Christ's word upon this great question. First conciliation, second arbitration, and third law. Let us apply this principle to all our disputes, and we will soon end the present labor difficulties.

THE TRANSFORMATION.

(By L. M. Montgomery.)

Upon the marsh mud, dank and foul,
A golden sunbeam softly fell,
And from the noisome depths arose
A lily miracle.
Upon a dark, bemired life
A gleam of human love was flung,
And lo, from that ungenial soil
A noble deed upsprung.

Cavendish, P.E.I.

God deals with men, not with organizations. This truth is worth bearing in mind in these days, when we are in the habit of forming a committee or a society to do every good work that needs doing. A great deal of energy is wasted nowadays merely in keeping a set of wheels in motion. Often if the force that is spent in operating religious and philanthropic machinery were applied directly to the objects aimed at, the net result would be far greater. It is better to do a personal, individual work for Christ, than merely to be apart of an organization which is doing the same kind of work.

CHOOSING OUR LIFE-WORK.*

Some Bible Hints.

Do not despise the dreams of youth; they are more real than many so-called realities of later life (v. 5).

Humility is one of the chief requisites for any success, because it means teachableness (v. 7).

The best business college is a knowledge of God, for we are dependent upon Him for the wisest guidance in all our work (v. 9).

Seek the first things first, and the second things will be added to them (v. 13).

Suggestive Thoughts.

Your life work should be in accordance with your desire, if your desire is to further the Kingdom of God.

Your powers, your opportunity, the world's need,—these are the three factors that should determine your choice of your life work.

Two causes lead men to press into the over-crowded occupations, — they are too sluggish to pioneer, or they are too content of their own powers.

Of all callings the noblest is preaching; it is also the most difficult to succeed in, the poorest paid, and the best paid!

A Few Illustrations.

Choosing one's life work for this life alone is like the choice of a bunch of grapes in preference to the title deed of a kingdom.

Many men's life's choices are determined by the will of their partners. This will always be the case if your partner is—Christ.

"My business"—these were the immortal words of William Carey — "is preaching the gospel; but I cobble shoes to pay expenses."

Holmes is a conspicuous illustration of the value of an avocation; for his vocation was medicine, and literature was only his side calling.

To Think About.

Am I letting selfishness choose my calling?

Will my calling call out the best that is in me?

Will the essentials of my life work go on through eternity?

A Cluster of Quotations.

If every man works at that for which nature fitted him, the cows will be well tended.—La Fontaine.

The measure of choosing well is whether a man likes what he has chosen.—Lamb.

The old proverb about having too many irons in the fire is an abominable old lie. Have all in, shovel, tongs and poker.—Adam Clarke.

Stick to your legitimate business. Do not go into outside operations. Few men have brains enough for more than one business.—Beecher.

The bridal path may be a dangerous road.

DAILY READINGS.

M., June 8.—All should work. 2 Thess. 3: 10-12.
T., June 9.—With the hands. 1 Thess. 4: 11, 12.
W., June 10.—Hard work necessary. Heb. 2: 1-10.
T., June 11.—Man's first work. Gen. 2: 8-15.
F., June 12.—Two vocations. Gen. 4: 1-7.
S., June 13.—Paul's trade. Acts 18: 1-3.
Sun., June 14.—How to choose a life-work. 1 Kings 3: 6-15.

* Young People's Topic, 13 June, 1908, "How to choose a life-work. 1 Kings 3: 6-15.